

Metropolitan King County Countywide Planning Policies Benchmark Program

Indicator 38 (continued)

- Sea-Shore's ratio rose just slightly - from 1.5 jobs per housing unit in 1990 to 1.6 jobs per housing unit in 2002.
- Recent layoffs have led to a slightly lower jobs-housing ratio in the South County in 2002 compared to 1990.

Urban Centers

- In most cases, the ratio of jobs to housing is much higher in the urban centers than in the County overall. Since the Urban Centers are intended to be centers of commercial activity and employment, this is not unexpected.
- Urban Centers are also meant to have a significant residential component in order to house local workers, and workers who commute by public transportation to other areas.
- Urban Centers with relatively high ratios of jobs to housing may need to encourage more residential growth to house local workers, and to fulfill the purpose of the centers.

- More local residents are likely to improve the commercial vitality of the centers, and to provide sufficient density for good public transportation.

Fig. 38.3

Jobs-Housing Ratio in Urban Centers			
City	Total Hsg Units in 2003	Employment: March 2002	Jobs / Housing Ratio (Jobs per housing unit)
Auburn**	900	3,102	3.4
Bellevue	3,569	27,914	7.8
Federal Way***	846	3,886	4.6
Kent	570	3,302	5.8
Kirkland/Totem Lake**	2,944	12,634	4.3
Redmond	1,276	12,845	10.1
Renton	1,045	14,327	13.7
SeaTac	4,082	8,631	2.1
Seattle	55,221	254,016	4.6
First Hill/Capitol Hill	23,587	38,619	1.6
Downtown	16,054	156,473	9.7
Northgate	3,667	10,638	2.9
Seattle Center/ Lower Queen Anne	4,700	15,536	3.3
University	7,213	32,750	4.5
Tukwila	2	18,590	9,295.0
Total	70,455	343,511	4.9

Outcome: Maintain the Quality and Quantity of Natural Resource Lands



Indicator 39: Acres in Forest Land

Countywide Planning Policy Rationale

"Agricultural and forest lands are protected primarily for their long-term productive resource value. However, these lands also provide secondary benefits such as open space, scenic views and wildlife habitat." (CPP LU-1)

Measuring the number of acres in forest and farmland is a way to monitor any change in our natural resource lands over time. There are technical and definitional challenges in counting forest acreage that may cause minor differences in acreage from year to year. Despite these minor discrepancies, Indicator 39 will detect if there are any major declines in forest land that would be cause for concern.

It is not only the amount of land that is at stake, but the maintenance of its quality as a significant resource. Forest production is an important economic resource of the County, while the preservation of forest land provides many other benefits. It provides continuous habitat for many species of wildlife, it protects stream quality for salmon habitat, it improves air quality, and it provides aesthetic and recreational opportunities.

Key Trends

- King County has maintained its forest land with very little change in the total acreage of forest since 1995. Changes in the total are mainly due to more accurate measurement.
- This is a reversal of the trend set between 1972 and 1996 when King County forest cover decreased by 33%.

- The acreage changes between private and industrial are due to changes in the way non-public forest land is categorized (e.g. "industrial" now includes rail and mining companies, as well as forest product companies.)
- Overall, it appears that there has been some increase in government ownership due to transfer of ownership from private and industrial.

Fig. 39.1

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Acres of Forest Land in Various Categories				
	1995	2000	2002	2004
Forest Production District (FPD)				
Federal Ownership	337,000	336,000	351,000	352,400
State Ownership	83,000	89,000	90,400	92,200
Municipal and County Ownership	94,000	118,000	117,000	117,400
Industrial Ownership (Private)	310,000	281,000	236,000	236,400
NIPF* Ownership			21,000	15,600
Other (Water bodies, rights of way, etc.)			9,200	10,600
FPD Total	824,000	824,000	824,600	824,600
Rural Forest Focus Areas (RFFA)				
Federal Ownership			70	70
State Ownership			4,800	4,740
Municipal and County Ownership			7,400	8,440
Industrial Ownership (Private)			4,800	8,670
NIPF* Ownership			33,800	29,480
Other (Water bodies, rights of way, etc.)			1,430	1,500
RFFA Total**	45,000	53,000	52,300	52,900
	869,000	877,000	876,900	877,500
*NIPF = Non-Industrial Private Forest land. This land was reported in the "private / industrial ownership" category prior to 2002. Nearly all of the increase in industrial ownership and decline in NIPF ownership in 2004 reflects changes in classification rather than actual changes in ownership. **The increase in the total rural forest focus areas from 1995 to 2000 is due to improved G.I.S. measurement.				

Indicator 39 (continued)

What We Are Doing

- Working to retain forestland for its environmental, social, and economic benefits through the King County Forestry Program.
- Working to prevent the parcelization of large industrial forests.
- Encouraging forest stewardship by residential forest landowners. Providing forest stewardship workshops in cooperation with other agencies.

- Purchasing development rights through the Transfer of Development Rights Program, to prevent the conversion of forest to residential estates.
- Offering financial incentives that can benefit forest landowners, such as the Current Use Taxation Program.

Outcome: Maintain the Quality and Quantity of Natural Resource Lands

Indicator 40: Acres in Farmland and Number and Average Size of Farms



Countywide Planning Policy Rationale

"A fundamental component of the Countywide planning strategy is the maintenance of the traditional character of the Rural Area with its mix of forests, farms, high-quality natural environment....Commercial and non-commercial farming...shall be encouraged to continue and to expand as possible." (CPP FW-9. See also LU 22 - 23)

Indicator 40 monitors how well we are maintaining our agricultural resource land, in the same way that Indicator 39 monitors forest land. Fig. 40.3 looks at whether there has been any significant change in the total amount of agricultural land. Note that the minor changes in acreage are due to measurement differences rather than genuine change in the amount of farmland.

As with forest land, it is the quality of the land use that is at stake as well as the quantity. When farmland is subdivided, or farms shrink in size from other causes, it becomes difficult to sustain agriculture on them, and they are vulnerable to development for non-agricultural purposes.

King County's Agriculture Program aims to support sustainable farming, as well as to preserve and protect our remaining agricultural land.

Key Trends

- The number of acres in farms in King County has not changed appreciably since 1997. Although farms and farm acreage were higher during the 1980s, the current amount of farmed land is only slightly lower than in 1977.

Fig. 40.1

Acres of Land in Farms in King County: 1977 - 2002

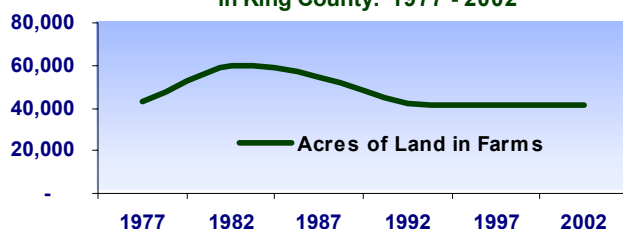


Fig. 40.2

Total Number and Average Size of Farms in King County						
	1977	1982	1987	1992	1997	2002*
Acres in Farms	43,116	59,813	54,172	42,290	41,653	41,769
Number of Farms	1,187	1,719	1,498	1,221	1,091	1,548
Average Farm Size, in Acres	36	35	36	35	38	27
Proportion of County Land Area in Farms	3%	4%	4%	3%	3%	3%

*There is a U.S. Dept. of Agriculture Census taken every 5 years. One was completed in 2002, but the methodology was changed from previous years. The higher number of farms with smaller average size is consistent with a King County survey completed in 2004.

- The proportion of the total County land area that is being farmed has remained at about 3% since 1992 - the same proportion that was being farmed in 1977.
- There are over 66,000 acres of farmland in the Agricultural Production Districts (APDs), in other agricultural-zoned land, and in active farms in the rural areas. Most, but not all, preserved agricultural land in King County is currently farmed.

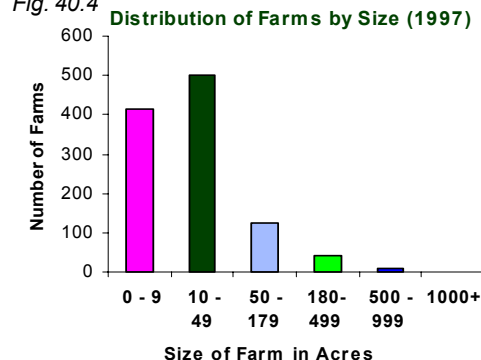
Fig. 40.3

Acres of Farm Land in Various Categories			
	1995	2000	2004*
Agricultural Production District (APD)	41,000	41,210	40,560
Agricultural Zoned Land outside of APDs	9,200	647	740
Acres Farmed in Rural Areas (outside APDs or other Ag. Zones)		8,675	25,352
Total Farm Land	50,200	50,532	66,652

*King County Dept. of Natural Resources conducted a survey of active farms in 2004 and found the 25,352 acres of farms in rural areas. This farm land is in addition to the agricultural-zoned land and APD's. Some (but not all) of this land is enrolled in the Current Use Taxation Program.

- Farms in King County are relatively small. About 40% of them are under 10 acres, while another 46% are between 10 and 50 acres.

Fig. 40.4



What We Are Doing

- Preserving farm land and the viability of farms by allowing the development of small-scale processing and storage that would facilitate creation of farm cooperatives (e.g., shared commercial kitchens).

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